

TODAY'S EDITORIAL

## Lingle is the ideal

In the past 12 months or so, we have occasionally (OK, more than occasionally) been critical of Gov. Linda Lingle.

Those criticisms aside, she is still the Hawaiian politician we admire most. Simply put, Linda Lingle is forthright, courageous and probably the most remarkable Hawaiian politician of this generation.

All of which makes us a little testy when we read things like The Associated Press story in Saturday's edition of The Maui News that said Lt. Gov. James "Duke" Aiona might have a problem running in Lingle's shadow. The story went on to say that Aiona's opponent, Neil Abercrombie, believes the election of Aiona will result in a continuation of "the last seven and a half years."

Boy, tell you what, Aiona could have a lot bigger problem than running in Lingle's shadow.

Can anyone imagine what our budget mess would be — or what our taxes would be — if anyone but Linda Lingle would have been in charge as a countermeasure to our hyper-Democratic Legislature when our economy collapsed?

The AP story made it sound like running for governor as Lingle's lieutenant governor put Aiona at a disadvantage.

Well, we'd advise Aiona to put a picture of Lingle on an easel at every campaign rally he holds. We'd put a sign with an arrow pointing to the picture that said "I was her partner. Vote for me."

Most residents know she is a hardworking champion for Hawaii. She is certainly Maui's success story. We remember a few years ago a local politician telling us, "Of all Maui's mayors, the only one I really enthusiastically endorsed for re-election was Linda Lingle."

Well, we're sorry Lingle can't run for another term as governor. She is our idea of what a gutsy, principled politician should be. So, we'd give Abercrombie a bit of advice:

Don't run against the specter of Linda Lingle. If you do, you're going to lose.

■ Editorials reflect the opinion of the publisher.